

Recommendations by the Accreditation Team and Report of the Accreditation Visit for Professional Preparation Programs at Mills College

Professional Services Division

June 12, 1998

Overview of This Report

This agenda report includes the findings of the Accreditation Team visit conducted at Mills College. The report of the team presents the findings based upon reading the Institutional Self-Study Reports, review of supporting documentation and interviews with representative constituencies. On the basis of the report, an accreditation recommendation is made for the institution.

Accreditation Recommendations

- 1) The Team recommends that, based on the attached Accreditation Team Report, the Committee on Accreditation make the following accreditation decision for Mills College and all of its credential programs: **ACCREDITATION**

On the basis of this recommendation, the institution is authorized to recommend candidates for the following Credentials:

- Multiple Subject Credentials
 - Multiple Subject
 - Multiple Subject with CLAD Emphasis
 - Multiple Subject with an Early Childhood Emphasis
- Single Subject Credentials
 - Single Subject
 - Single Subject with CLAD Emphasis
- Administrative Services Credential
 - Preliminary
 - Preliminary Internship

- 2) Staff recommends that:

- The institution's response to the preconditions be accepted.
- Mills College be permitted to propose new credential programs for approval by the Committee on Accreditation.

- Mills College be placed on the schedule of accreditation visits for the 2003-2004 academic year.

Background Information

Mills College is a small, residential liberal arts college for women. It enrolls more than 800 undergraduate women and 300 men and women in graduate programs. The faculty is evenly divided between women and men, and the ratio of students to faculty is approximately 11 to 1, with an average class size of 20. Mills is the only independent women's college in the San Francisco Bay Area. Mills offers 33 majors in English and foreign literature's, languages and cultures, ethnic and women's studies, creative writing, the fine arts, the natural sciences, mathematics and computer science, the social sciences and education.

The Mills Department of Education administers a Children's School, established in 1926 as the first campus-based demonstration nursery school on the West Coast. Now serving nearly 100 children between the ages of three months and nine years, the school provides a laboratory for the preparation of Mills students as early childhood professionals and an environment for research and study of children by both students and faculty.

Mills dates its founding as 1852, the year in which a Young Ladies Seminary was established at Benicia, California. Two years later Mary Atkins, a graduate of Oberlin College, took charge of the school; Cyrus and Susan Mills purchased it from her in 1865. Cyrus and Susan Mills became educational missionaries together in Ceylon and Hawaii, then came to California with the dream of founding a college. Cyrus Mills began purchasing the acres of rolling farmland outside Oakland which was to become the present campus.

Preparation for the Accreditation Visit

The Commission staff consultant was assigned to the institution in Spring, 1996 and met with the institutional leadership in January, 1997 following several telephone conversations with faculty. The meeting led to decisions about team size, team configuration, standards to be used, format for the institutional self-study report, interview schedule, logistical and organizational arrangements.

Mills College elected to develop Alternative Program Standards for the review of its teacher education programs, pursuant to Option Five in the *Accreditation Framework*. The faculty developed these standards during the Winter and Spring

of 1996-97, and submitted them to Commission staff for analysis and review in June, 1997. Based on the staff review, the faculty made revisions to the draft standards and presented them to the Committee on Accreditation for consideration at its August 28, 1998 meeting. Following an indepth discussion with representatives of the Mills College Education faculty, the Committee placed the proposed Alternative Standards on its October, 1997 agenda for action. As a result of the discussion with the COA in August, the final document included six Alternative Standards and ten Institutional Assurances that addressed specific structural aspects of the teacher education program. On October 30, 1997, the Committee authorized the use of these Alternative Standards for the review of Mills' teacher education programs.

Preparation for the Institutional Self-Study Report

The Institutional Self-Study Report was prepared beginning with responses to the Common Standards. These responses were developed in reference to both program the teacher education and administrative services programs, and for the unit as a whole. This was followed by a separate response to the Institutional Assurances, the Alternative Standards, and the Administrative Services Credential Program Standards.

Selection and Composition of the Accreditation Team

Decisions about the structure and size of the team were made cooperatively between the education faculty and the Commission Consultant. It was agreed that there would be a team of four, consisting of a Team Leader and three team members. The Commission Consultant selected the team members to participate in the review. Team members were selected because of their expertise, experience, and adaptability, and trained in the use of the *Accreditation Framework*. The Team Leader, Dr. Ed Kujawa, was selected in August, 1997. On March 16, 1998, six weeks prior to the Accreditation visit, Dr. Kujawa conducted a training with the team focused specifically on the Mills Alternative Standards.

Intensive Evaluation of Program Data

Prior to the accreditation visit, team members received copies of the appropriate institutional reports and information from Commission staff on how to prepare for the visit. The COA Team Leader and members examined the college responses to the Common Standards, the Institutional Assurances, and the Alternative Standards. The on-site phase of the review began on Monday, April 27, 1998. The team arrived on Monday afternoon and begin their deliberations with one another. The meeting included a review of the accreditation procedures and organizational arrangements for the COA team members.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, April 28-29, the team collected data from interviews and reviewed institutional documents according to procedures outlined in the *Accreditation Handbook*. There was extensive consultation among the team members with much sharing of information. Lunch on Tuesday and Wednesday was spent sharing data that had been gathered from interviews and document review. The entire team met on Tuesday evening to discuss progress the first day and share information about findings. Wednesday evening was set aside for additional team meetings and the writing of the team report.

Preparation of the Accreditation Team Report

Pursuant to the *Accreditation Framework*, and the *Accreditation Handbook*, the team prepared a report using a narrative format. For each of the Common Standards, the team made a decision of "Standard Met" or "Standard Not Met." The team found one of the Common Standards (Standard 7) to be "Minimally Met". The team wrote specific narrative comments about each standard providing a finding or rationale for its decision and then outlining perceived Strengths or Concerns relative to the standard.

For the teacher education programs, the team prepared a narrative report about the Institutional Assurances and the Alternative Program Standards which indicated that all standards and institutional assurances were fully met and included explanatory information about findings related to the program standards. The team highlighted specific Strengths and Concerns related to the program areas.

The team included some "Professional Comments" at the end of the report for consideration by the institution. These comments are to be considered as consultative advice from the team members, but are not binding on the institution. They are not considered as a part of the accreditation recommendation of the team.

Accreditation Decisions by the Team

The team worked on the report Wednesday evening and Thursday morning, prior to a final review of the report and a decision about the results of the visit. The team discussed each Common Standard, each Institutional Assurance, and each Alternative Program Standard and decided on the basis of interviews and program documents that all but one of the Common Standards were fully met, and that all program standards were fully met.

The team made its accreditation recommendation based on its findings and the policies set forth in the *Accreditation Framework*. In its deliberations, the team

decided that several standards in both Common, Alternative and Administrative Services sections were worthy of being noted in areas of strength and in some cases, areas of concern. Although some areas of concern were noted in the team report, the overall quality of the programs mitigated the concerns. The team did not feel that the concerns were of sufficient magnitude to place any stipulations on the institution. The team then decided on an accreditation decision for the institution. The options were: "Accreditation," "Accreditation with Technical Stipulations," "Accreditation with Substantive Stipulations" or "Denial of Accreditation." After thorough discussion, the team decided to recommend the status of "**Accreditation.**" The recommendation for "Accreditation" was based on the unanimous agreement of the team.

Committee on Accreditation Accreditation Team Report

Institution: Mills College
Dates of Visit: April 27-30, 1998
Recommendation: Accreditation

Rationale:

The team recommendation for Accreditation was the result of a review of the Institutional Self Study Report, a review of additional supporting documents available during the visit, and interviews with administrators, faculty, students, local school personnel and other individuals professionally associated with the unit. The decision pertaining to the accreditation status of the unit was based upon the following:

1. Common Standards - The Common Standards were first reviewed one by one and then voted upon by the entire team. All but one were judged to have been fully met.
2. Institutional Assurances - The Institutional Assurances were reviewed one by one then voted upon by the entire team. All were judged to have been fully met with the exception of Number 10 relating to diverse teaching requirements.
3. Alternative Program Standards - The Alternative Program Standards were first reviewed one by one and then voted upon by the entire team. All were judged to have been fully met.
4. Administrative Services Program Standards - The Administrative Services Program Standards were first reviewed one by one and then voted upon by the entire team. All were judged to have been fully met.
5. Overall Recommendation - The decision to recommend Accreditation was, in part, based on team consensus that all but one of the Common Standards were fully met. Although some areas of concern are noted in this report, the overall quality of the unit and its programs is exceptional. Furthermore, the team determined that even though there were a few minor concerns, there were compensating strengths in the unit, and that a stipulation should be not be

placed on the institution. Compensating strengths included consistent reports from employers that graduates were well prepared, competent, and effective. The team concluded that all credential programs were effective and of very high quality. Therefore, the team reached the decision that the overall evidence clearly supported the above accreditation recommendation.

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Team Members: **Patricia Sako Briglio**
Bassett High School
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Violet Robinson
Elementary Education
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#	Interviews Conducted	#	Documents Reviewed
14	Program Faculty	X	Catalog
4	Institutional Administration	X	Institutional Self-Study
58	Candidates	X	Course Syllabi
21	Graduates	X	Candidate Files
3	Employers of Graduates	X	Fieldwork Handbook
10	Cooperating Teachers	X	Follow-up Survey Results
2	School Administrators	X	Information Booklet
1	Credential Analyst/Advisor	X	Field Experience Notebook
2	Advisory Committee	X	Advisement Documents
		X	Faculty Vitae

Common Standards

1. Educational Leadership

Standard Met

Leadership in the School of Education is identified as being participatory. The Chair of the Department, all program directors, faculty, and staff cooperate and collaborate in the leadership and development of the program. Program review and change is ongoing, which is consistent with the philosophy and the six principles that provide the foundation for the program at Mills College. There is a spirit of service among the program directors, faculty and staff toward candidates which results in the development of a small learning community that includes administration, faculty and candidates as a collaborative team.

Strengths

The administration and faculty model a team approach to leadership. It is evident that there is a collegial approach to decision making and problem solving.

Concerns

None noted.

2. Resources

Standard Met

The School of Education receives strong support from the administration and Board of Trustees. Mills College will soon build new facilities that include a new school of education, a new early childhood preschool and a new elementary school. This is evidence of a major commitment to the continuation of the educational programs at Mills College. The faculty have been active in pursuing grants that support programs to train candidates and teachers.

Strengths

The faculty and administration in the School of Education receive a tremendous amount of support at Mills College. The new School of Education, early childhood preschool, and elementary school will be a tremendous addition to the Mills College Educational Programs. Funds provided for professional development assist faculty to develop expertise in such areas as technology and research. The Leadership Institute for Teachers of Elementary Science (LITE) grant for science teachers in the Oakland schools and the Mid-Career Mathematics and Science Teachers at Mills (MCMS) for training future science and mathematics teachers provide valuable resources.

Concerns

None noted.

3. Faculty

Standard Met

The faculty at Mills College hold themselves to a high standard of excellence in their teaching. The faculty are well prepared for their teaching assignments. In addition faculty are expected to be involved in research and service to the community.

Strengths

The faculty model the six principles embedded in the educational program. They are known to have demanding and rigorous expectations of their teacher candidates and to practice the "ethic of care" that they are trying to develop in their candidates. They are accessible to and well liked by the candidates. They have tremendous knowledge and understanding of subject matter. They are active professionally in giving presentations, grant and publication writing, and their own professional development. The administration has supported the recruitment of a more diverse faculty by allowing funds to be used for this purpose.

Concerns

None noted.

4. Evaluation

Standard Met

Members of the Teacher Education and Administrative Services Advisory Committees indicate that their voices are heard by the administration and faculty. There is evidence that surveys and other data are obtained from graduates and candidates who are completing the program.

Strengths

The administration and faculty constantly use inquiry and reflection in the review of their credential programs. This process results in a program that is constantly evolving to meet the needs of its constituents.

Concerns

None noted.

5. Admissions

Standard Met

Mills College has high admissions standards. The standards for admission to the credential programs are consistent with those of the rest of the college.

Strengths

The administration and faculty have made an effort to keep the program small. This enables the candidates and faculty to develop a community of learners that are able to implement the six principles of the program. The candidates who are admitted have demonstrated high academic achievement and have strong recommendations supporting their admission to the program.

Concerns

None noted.

6. Advice and Assistance**Standard Met**

The advice and assistance given to candidates is an outstanding feature of the program. A great deal of care is taken to give candidates clear consistent answers to questions. The methods used to provide students with program and credential information are effective.

Strengths

The new coordinator of teacher education position created to assist candidates as they progress through the credentialing process is a success with students. The level of advisement and care is excellent. Faculty are identified as being accessible and consistent in their advisement in the program. Candidates feel comfortable with the level of advisement they get in the program. The weekly Tidbits Newsletter is a creative way to get information to students.

Concerns

None noted.

7. School Collaboration**Standard Minimally Met**

District personnel in collaborating school sites have a high regard for the Mills Faculty. The program is deeply focused on preparing candidates to assume teaching positions in urban settings. Cooperating teachers are invited to campus to participate in colloquia on supervision of student teachers. Many, but not all, cooperating teachers model and/or support the principles of the professional preparation program at Mills College.

Strengths

The ongoing retreats and seminars are a valuable way to build a sense of community and discuss the principles of the program.

Concerns

Courses are offered at times that make it difficult for some secondary cooperating teachers to meet with candidates to discuss important events or concerns that occur on

certain days during student teaching. Candidates have to leave at mid-day to attend Mills classes and cooperating teachers are not always able to meet with them because of their teaching schedules.

The match between the program principles and the philosophy of some single subject cooperating teachers needs to improve. Some cooperating teachers have philosophies in the classroom that are so different from the Mills College professional preparation program that it is difficult to determine the extent to which these cooperating teachers can serve as an extension of the Mills preparation program.

8. Field Supervisors

Standard Met

The supervisors receive strong evaluations from the candidates and cooperating teachers in the field. They are viewed as excellent models of the Mills program. They are seen as excellent resources for getting ideas for the classroom. They provide timely feedback through the use of the student journals.

Strengths

Field supervisors have a strong commitment to candidates and are knowledgeable about the program's principles.

Concerns

None Noted

Institutional Assurances

Mills College prepared a list of eleven assurances which were approved by the Committee on Accreditation. The college has fully met all of the Institutional Assurances *except* Number Ten. Candidates in the single subject credential program are able to meet this institutional assurance for assuming the responsibilities of full-time teachers by taking full responsibility for only one class period during their second semester. This is less than adequate for meeting this assurance. Some graduates reported that they were not prepared for the rigor of teaching a full day with multiple preparations. There needs to be more substantial responsibility and experience by the candidate to meet this institutional assurance.

Alternative Program Standards

**Multiple Subject with ECE Emphasis,
Multiple Subject with CLAD Emphasis,
Single Subject with CLAD Emphasis**

Standard 1: Teaching as a Moral Act Based on an Ethic of Care Standard Met

Data from interviews with college program directors, faculty, candidates, graduates of the programs, cooperating teachers, and employers reveal the impressive strength of this standard in the program. All courses in the program include this component, and relationships are made between subject matter and this standard. Course assignments and projects reflect grade level sequences in learning related to the ethic of caring. This orientation has enabled the candidates to be especially successful in working with at-risk students. Cooperating teachers report the positive influence of this orientation not only on their students but also on themselves. A significant factor in relation to this standard is that the faculty function as models for the candidates. Their genuine concern and caring for the candidates is reflected in written comments, e-mail, telephone calls, and weekend appointments. As a number of people said: "The faculty walk the talk."

Strengths

That these credential programs have included a standard devoted to moral and ethical behavior is commendable.

That *all* courses in the program include the program principles is a factor of strength that contributes to the development of this standard as a strongly held conviction on the part of the candidates present and past. That this conviction has been found to be particularly effective with at-risk children is commendable.

The modeling of this standard by the faculty is a strength, as are the types of assignments that develop this standard in the candidates. Two examples of these assignments are the *Case of Self as Teacher* and the *Ethical Dilemmas* projects. For the ECE candidates, further modeling occurs as they participate in the Children's School.

Concerns

None noted.

Standard 2: Teaching as an Act of Inquiry and Reflection **Standard Met**

Inquiry and reflection abound throughout this program. Course assignments include inquiry about issues, including gathering and analyzing data, forming conclusions, and then renewed reflecting about the issue. Candidates engage in inquiry as they determine the learning needs of students, using their knowledge of child or adolescent psychology in their inquiry. Asking questions is an important part of inquiry, as they and the cooperating teachers attest. The candidates see inquiry as a tool to improve their teaching and see themselves as learners.

Inquiry and reflection are related as candidates engage in activities such as the *Case of Self as Teacher* project, where they ask themselves probing questions about their teaching and engage in analytical reflection as they bring knowledge to bear upon the questions. Candidates keep journals that include their own reflective evaluations of lessons in which they draw upon theories presented in the college classes. Candidates also compile portfolios that reflect aspects of their learning, and student teachers write autobiographies.

Discussions in the college classes stimulate inquiry and reflection. Comments by faculty on written assignments provoke further inquiry and reflection.

Strengths

The engagement of candidates in both inquiry and reflection is a strength of the program. Another strength is that this process generates understanding of

relationship between the various aspects of teaching. Especially noteworthy in this process for the ECE candidates was the extent to which they, the cooperating teachers, and graduates all commented about the relation of theory to practice. The faculty are to be commended for developing these components in their students through such a wide variety of significant learning experiences.

Weaknesses

None noted.

Standard 3: Learning as a Constructive/ Developmental Process
Standard Met

The conduct of the college classes is such that candidates construct their knowledge about teaching. Faculty provide a variety of activities in which candidates gain theoretical and other information from which the candidates construct knowledge. In one curriculum course, for example, these activities included assigned readings, discussion of the material, examining samples of curricula for implicit theories, analyzing the samples in relation to a heuristic, and writing units that include a rationale regarding subject matter and learning. Candidates experienced constructing knowledge; they formed principles about the construction of knowledge and then applied them in the classroom. Samples of the candidates' units confirm their ability to provide constructivist learning for their students. Cooperating teachers also confirm the candidates' ability to develop appropriate curriculum. Here again, there were references to the ECE candidates' understanding of theory-practice relations, especially regarding principles of child growth and development.

Strengths

Constructivism as a theory of learning is a strength of the program. The conduct of the college classes is a strength that promotes this theory of learning. The faculty are to be commended for their design of this aspect of the program, a design that enables candidates to construct knowledge about the who, what, when, and why of teaching and learning.

Concerns

None noted.

Standard 4: Teaching for the Acquisition and Construction of Subject Matter Knowledge

Standard Met

The teaching credential programs at Mills provide a solid foundation for candidates to develop strong subject matter knowledge which enables them to construct lessons that are based in student-centered curriculum. The candidates understand and demonstrate a strong working knowledge of subject matter and a deep perception for the need to teach in a variety of ways that are appropriate for diverse learners. In the curriculum courses, candidates learn different ways of teaching subject matter content. Candidates understand the State Frameworks with depth and density.

Strength

The development of subject matter knowledge through thematic units and the spiral curriculum in the Mills credential programs is to be commended. Candidates have a deep understanding of how to plan lessons that are integrated and designed for children to develop powerful subject matter knowledge.

Candidates in the Multiple Subject ECE credential program develop subject matter knowledge and experience curriculum taught in different ways through their four candidate teaching placements. These placements provide the opportunity to have a broad base of knowledge and experience. The focus on developmental theory in the ECE program developed in candidates a strong understanding of children.

Weaknesses

There were some graduates of the Single Subject CLAD program who recommended that more training in the area of classroom management would have better prepared them for their own classrooms. Some current candidates teaching in urban settings felt under prepared to deal with the following issues: how to design lessons for a class with high truancy, how to address substance abuse among students, and how to implement their statutory reporting requirements.

Standard 5: Teaching as a Collegial Act

Standard Met

Collegiality is the norm of the teaching credential programs at Mills. The faculty models collegiality in every aspect of the program. Faculty members jointly construct assignments, observe one another, team teach, make decisions collaboratively and communicate well with one another. Candidates consistently

identified the importance of the collegiality they have developed with their peers and this bond provided them with support that was critical in their professional development. Candidates felt a strong sense of collegiality within their own programs, across cohorts, and with the faculty. Candidates are provided with opportunities to work collegially through cross grade-level cohort classes, seminars, and joint projects.

Strengths

The strong sense of collegiality and respect among the faculty and candidates is highly commended. Candidates have self-confidence and create strong professional and personal bonds with one another. Candidates specifically cited that the strong sense of collegiality within the program and the development of their understanding that teaching is not a job one can do alone or in isolation, provided them with the inner strength to continue at times when they may have felt discouraged. The faculty is to be commended for developing a strong community of learners where candidates and colleagues are respected and talent is given credit.

Concerns

None noted.

Standard 6: Teaching as a Political Act

Standard Met

Teachers are agents of change and the teaching credential programs at Mills are strongly committed to the understanding of teaching as a political act. Candidates are made aware that there are political implications of their actions and that their decisions as educators have an impact on access and equity in education. The content of courses include diverse cultural, academic and political perspectives, especially perspectives that have been historically excluded.

Strengths

There is a strong commitment by the faculty to develop within candidates a deep understanding of why they are teaching and to understand the consequences of their actions. Many candidates commented that they never considered themselves to be political but now understand that the act of teaching is political in regards to their work with colleagues, children, families, and the community. Candidates have opportunities to share experiences, analyze problematic situations and develop a strong sense of responsibility. Candidates are encouraged to reflect on their teaching practices to ensure that all children have equal access, and are valued. Candidates feel that they have a voice for change in a school setting.

Concerns

None noted.

Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Program and

Preliminary Administrative Services Internship Program

Findings on Standards

The Mills College Administrative Services Credential Program began its first year with an introductory course (Education 315) in the Summer of 1997. The Preliminary Administrative Services Credential and Preliminary Administrative Services Internship Credential Programs are meeting the Commission's prescribed standards listed in Categories III (Curriculum), IV (Field Experiences), and V (Domains of Candidate Competence and Performance) as presented in the Mills College Self Study. The team was concerned that there may not be enough students enrolled in the program to maintain a core of regularly scheduled classes while meeting the personal needs of individual students.

Collaboration with community school agencies and Field Mentors has been enhanced by having a Program Director who is well known and respected by district and site administrators in the area surrounding Mills College. It is also important to note that a diverse, knowledgeable group of educators collaborated and gave input into the development of the Administrative Services Credential Program and that the Commission standards have been holistically addressed in thematic strands throughout the curriculum.

The Administrative Services Credential Program is well supported by the Education Department and the Administration at Mills College. Recently acquired resources will enable the Education Department to have a new building that will include updated technology for candidates and staff which will assist the ASC program in meeting Standard 30, Use of Technology.

Strengths

The director and faculty are to be commended for their careful planning, commitment and willingness to implement, evaluate, and refine a quality Administrative Services Credential Program. The knowledge and reputation of the director of the ASC Program has resulted in quality course instruction and field experiences for the candidates. Interviews with Field Mentors (site administrators) indicate satisfaction with the articulation and feedback process between the Field Mentors and the Mills College program supervisors.

Innovative strategies are incorporated into courses to ensure that all candidates have a variety of indepth administrative experiences. ASC candidate journal entries receive regular feedback and personal comments from faculty, which address

candidates' personal reflections and dilemmas. Interviews and documents indicate that an especially strong foundation is provided to candidates in the competence areas of Professional Perspectives and Administrative Concepts (Standards 12 & 14 respectively), Fiscal Resources and Business Service Administration (Standard 26), Legal and Regulatory Applications (Standard 27), and School and Community Collaboration (Standard 29).

Concerns

Processes need to be institutionalized to ensure that Standards 18 & 19 (Collaboration with Educational Agencies and Qualifications and Recognition of Supervising Administrators) are consistently implemented so that all ASC candidates and their Field Mentors will receive equal information and benefits from the field experiences. Preserving the current quality of Field Mentors and nurturing additional site and mentor resources is essential to the variety and success of administrative field experiences.

There appears to be a slight unevenness or inconsistency in the variety of technological experiences and preparation gained in the ASC Program by the administrative candidates (Standard 30 - Use of Technology). As education enters the 21st Century, education administrators need to be well versed as users and consumers of technology. ASC candidates need to know how to access information, analyze and collate data, promote programs, acquire human and program resources, and expend public funds wisely. The ASC program could improve in this area.

Professional Comment

Of concern is the successful implementation of the Professional Administrative Services Credential and the commitment of Mills College to support an initially small cohort of candidates. Ongoing recruitment of candidates and qualified faculty is essential to the growth and continued success of the program.